Dear Dr. Sabin,

I had the very great pleasure of meeting you a few times during your visit to Israel in September 1959. During a private conversation at Dr. Goldblum's house, I had an opportunity of telling you very briefly of an outbreak of paralytic polio concentrated in a small area adjoining that of Kibbutz Gat (which you visited), and of the interesting finding that severe measles had preceded this outbreak. You encouraged me enormously by saying that it was important to get this down on paper so that later someone could summarise the available scanty literature on the subject.

I asked your opinion as to treatment at the onset of such a severe epidemic and you suggested that live poliovirus vaccine would work quicker than gamma-globulin. This brief conversation I found most useful since a paper describing the epidemic, written by Dr. Massry and myself, had been accepted for publication by "Harefuah" (Journal of the Medical Association of Israel) in which Journal it appeared in October 1959, and I was able to bring it up to date with your opinion on the relative merits of live poliovirus vaccine and gamma-globulin in the unlikely event of a repetition. Incidentally, at the time of the epidemic in 1958, we went through the literature on gamma-globulin, and were impressed by your careful analysis ("Yearbook of Pediatrics", 1953-54, p. 122) of which cases should have it. We felt that your criteria fitted the picture of a high incidence of paralytic cases in Even-Emuel, but probably gave the gamma-globulin too late. This was before the first papers on the use of live vaccine at the onset of an epidemic.

At the time our paper was published in "Harefuah", I was in London as a post-graduate British Council Scholar, based on Great Ormond St., and took the opportunity of extending the search for literature on the subject in the leading Medical libraries in London, and of the International Children's Centre in Longchamps, Paris and came up with very little.

Largely as a result of the conversation with you, we decided to prepare an English version of our paper, since the Hebrew one although it had brief summaries in English and French, is only for local consumption. This new version we feel is an improvement as it concentrates only on the relationship between measles and polio. The Editor of the "Harefuah" has given us written permission to send it for possible publication, in a suitable American Public Health or Pediatrics Journal.

Dr. Massry and I would be most grateful to you, if you could find the time to read through the enclosed draft copy and criticise it. Even if you thought it was not up to standard for publication, we feel we would learn a great deal from your criticism. If you think it good enough for publication, could you kindly suggest a suitable journal. In that case too, could we quote you in the Discussion on the use of live vaccine at the onset of such a dreadful virulent epidemic.

All the Doctors in the area who had the privilege of meeting you, Dr. Shapiro (now retired), Dr. Horetzy from Gat and others send you their very warm regards and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A. Bloch

Afridar-Ashkelon,
ISRAEL.